

THE CATHOLIC MIND

Vol. XXXVIII.

SEPTEMBER 22, 1940.

No. 906.

The _____ **LEAGUE FOR GOD**

Second Series

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THE LEAGUE FOR GOD

More than 2,000,000 copies of leaflets were distributed in England by The League for God during the past fifteen months. These leaflets present the facts of God and of the soul in simple, fascinating language. They are published for the first time in the United States in the two issues for September of THE CATHOLIC MIND.

Preface by Francis X. Talbot, S.J., editor of AMERICA. Read also the article by one of the founders of The League for God, Joseph G. Miles, printed in AMERICA under date of August 3, 1940.

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THE CATHOLIC MIND

VOL. XXXVIII SEPTEMBER 22, 1940 No. 906

The League for God

(In The Catholic Mind for September 8th, a brief explanation of The League for God prefaced the reprinting of the leaflets which were distributed throughout England. Attention is again called to the article by Joseph G. Miles, entitled God on the Doorsteps, published in America, August 3, 1940. The short articles which follow carry through the series of thoughts designed to bring all men to a keener realization of the existence and providence of God, and to a desire to guard and save their own souls as well as the world about them.)

V

A TOY ENGINE . . .

requires very little attention. It has no very intricate machinery to get out of order. Thousands of such engines are turned out by mass production every year and they are very inexpensive to buy. Nobody, therefore, is very much worried when a toy engine wears out or is broken. It is so easily and cheaply replaced by another.

A railway engine

on the other hand, requires the constant attention of skilled engineers to keep it in smooth running order. It is a very powerful and intricate piece of mechanism. Moreover, it is very costly to produce and, unlike the toy engine, it is not easily replaced when it goes wrong.

It is treated, therefore, with the greatest possible care in order that it may maintain its speed and pulling power over the longest possible period.

The production of a railway engine requires skilled workmanship, and undergoes the most severe tests. When eventually it leaves the workshop to take its place in the great network of railway lines linking up the various parts of the country, it runs according to a time table. It is essential for the proper running of a railway system that an engine should be at certain points at certain times.

The instructions given for the engine's use by the maker must be obeyed

The various gauges, for instance, must be carefully watched. A regulated supply of water and fuel must be used to maintain the correct head of steam. The brakes and various parts must be periodically examined, oiled and so on. If these things were not done, the engine could not do the work for which it was made. Unless the instructions for its use were most carefully followed, the engine would quickly lose speed and power.

It is exactly the same with the world

When God created us, and gave us this wonderful world to live in, He gave us certain rules for its use, just as the maker of an engine gives instructions for the engine's use. Those instructions are the Ten Commandments. They were given to us in order that the world should run smoothly, and that we should be properly able to perform the duty for which we were created.

Now none of us is so foolish as to blame the maker of an engine when it goes wrong through the neglect or carelessness of its driver. We know very well that it is not the maker's fault.

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Yet people will say: "How can there be a loving God when there is so much suffering, so many wars and threats of war, so much cruelty and injustice?"

Does it never occur to such people that man may be in some way to blame? We do not expect a railway engine to work properly when the Maker's laws are disregarded. On the contrary, we expect accidents to happen. How, then, can we expect our affairs to run smoothly when *our* Maker's laws are disregarded? *Just as an engine is put out of order, and sorrow and suffering brought to innocent passengers by the engine driver's refusal to obey orders, so is the world thrown into confusion, so do the innocent suffer by man's refusal to obey God's laws.*

Many men today are like negligent engine drivers.

They break God's laws day after day because they hope, by so doing, to snatch for themselves some worldly advantage or pleasure. Selfishness is the keynote of many men's actions. They covet their neighbor's goods, steal, lie, dishonor their parents and commit every kind of crime to obtain material benefits.

We all know that there can be no real happiness in a home where selfish, greedy children ignore and disobey their parents. We know that nothing runs smoothly in such a home—that all is unhappiness and disorder. Well, this world is our home—the home of all the millions who make up the human family—and God is our father. Among these millions are many who keep His Commandments, but there are also many who are disobedient, who ignore God and refuse to obey Him.

It is these disobedient, defiant children in the human family who are causing the strife and unhappiness in the world. They are the engine drivers who,

by their refusal to obey orders, are wrecking the engine and putting the railway system out of order.

They involve innocent people in the major accidents of the world

Unemployment, wars, persecutions, low wages and bad housing, to mention but a few, are the direct results of their defiance of God's laws. The logical outcome of their greed and selfishness is Godlessness.

Not God, but men, by their injustices, greed and selfishness, are responsible for the suffering and strife in the world today, and that suffering and strife will be removed when, and only when, men get back to God and to obedience to His Commandments.

To this, no doubt, many will reply: "That is all very well, but why does a loving God permit such things to happen? Why does He allow the innocent to suffer with the guilty?"

The answer is that just as an engine driver is free either to obey or to disobey the maker's instructions—and just as his refusal to obey brings suffering to himself and to others—so also is each one of us free to do or not to do God's will, and so also does our decision to defy God's law bring suffering in its train.

The Remedy

therefore, lies in obedience to God's laws.

For the whole purpose of our life here on earth is to obey the instructions of the Maker—that is, to do the will of God. He made us to know Him, love Him and serve Him in this life and to be happy forever with Him in the life to come.

VI

WE ALL LOOK FORWARD . . .

to our first cup of coffee in the morning. Almost the first thing we do on rising is to put the kettle on the gas for a cup of coffee. Gas is very convenient. We have only to strike a match and the gas lights immediately. We take this for granted because we know it can't help lighting. Our experience tells us that gas always lights when a match is put to it. That is one of the properties of gas. That is the law.

Water won't light for anyone

Try turning on the water tap and see. The water wouldn't light if you could help your match there for a thousand years. That again is the law, and just as you don't praise the gas for lighting, so you don't blame the water for not lighting. You know that gas is bound to light, and you know that the water is bound not to. In other words, you are aware that these things are what is called matter—that they are governed by certain laws and that they must obey those laws.

We are different from gas and water

We are sure of this because we know that we are not bound by laws that we must obey. We know that we are free to choose. You who are reading this, for instance, are quite sure that you can refrain from reading it if you so desire.

If we were not free, if we were bound by fixed laws as the gas and the water are, we should be forced to believe that the man who sacrifices his life to save his friend can't help it, and that the fellow who commits murder can't help it either.

Strange as it may seem, some people actually do

wish us to believe this. They say that whatever we do, or do not do, we are not responsible—that because we are nothing more than matter we cannot help ourselves.

But we are not matter only

We are matter and spirit. One very definite proof of this can be drawn from the fact of personality. It is now well known that the human body is entirely renewed in the course of a few years. Some authorities say that it is renewed every few months—that none of the flesh of our bodies existed six months ago.

The body is like a river—we may look upon it all our lives yet never see the same water twice. But it remains the same river, and we know, too, that we are the same persons that we have always been. We know that there is in each of us some unchanging principle by which we shall always remain ourselves. In other words, there is, in each of us, an abiding identity of personality. A man says "I" when he refers to himself at any stage of his existence. He says, for example, "I was born"; "I live"; "Some day I shall die." He knows that he has the same identity in youth, in maturity and in old age.

It is obvious, therefore, that as the matter of which his body is composed "I" is something other than matter. That something is what we call the soul.

That man has a soul

is also evident from the fact that we know much more than our senses alone can tell us.

Man has been likened to a city with five gates. Through each of these gates come messengers with news of what is passing in the world outside. These gates are the five senses—sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch—and man learns many things by the use of these five senses.

But man knows also many things which the senses cannot tell him. It is true that the materials from which he derives this knowledge come to him only through the medium of one or more of the five senses, but something within him raises that information to a higher plane than the senses of themselves could ever reach.

We know, for instance, what justice is, but we cannot have learned the meaning of justice by the senses alone. Such an abstract idea as that of justice cannot be grasped in any way by the senses. We may have heard a just judgment, seen a just action, touched a just man or woman, but we have never seen, heard, smelt, tasted, or felt justice itself.

This knowledge of things

that the senses cannot tell us proves the existence within us of a power which is independent of our senses. This power is called intellect, reason or mind. These are but other names for the thinking or rational soul, and because the soul acts independently of matter, and because it forms abstract ideas which cannot be formed by the senses, we know that it is something distinct from matter, that is, something immaterial. This is the spiritual side of man, his soul.

This soul is the seat of man's memory, understanding, and will

Some people argue that because a man cannot use these powers of memory, understanding and will if his brain be injured, therefore brain and mind are one and the same thing. We know, however, that this is not so because the brain is material while the mind is immaterial. Moreover, it is impossible for any material substance to have memory, will or understanding, and the mind has all three.

Our wills also can remain constant over a great

number of years, and our understanding of things not only remains constant but actually develops with the years and with our experiences. This could not be so if the brain, which is constantly changing, were identical with the mind.

Memory, understanding and will

are not, therefore, the mere material content of the brain. A dead body, even if the brain is intact, can neither understand, remember nor exercise the power to choose. A living person can. This is sure proof that when a person dies something other than matter departs from the body—something spiritual. That something is the life principle which is called the soul, and it is immaterial.

Now that which is material can have no control over that which is immaterial. A wish, an aspiration or a thought, for instance, cannot be controlled by any material substance. It is certain, then, that the death of the material body does not involve the destruction of the soul. It is certain that the soul continues to exist when the body has perished.

We know, therefore, that man has body and soul. We know that when the body dies the soul lives on. We are certain, beyond all doubt, that there is life after death.

VII

A WOMAN, A DOG, A WALNUT TREE,

—the more they're beaten, the better they be.

So runs the old proverb. We are not concerned, however, to deny or affirm the truth of this proverb or to advocate the beatings which it recommends. There is another and far more interesting point about this proverb. It brings together four very dissimilar things—a stick, a tree, an animal and a human being—and the consideration of the differences between these four things is of the greatest interest and importance.

A Walking Stick

as you know, is not a living thing. If it is put into the hallstand, or stood in a corner, it simply remains there until somebody moves it again. If anyone told you he had seen a walking stick going for a walk by itself you would certainly feel justified in not believing him. You know very well that a walking stick does not move by itself. You know that it cannot move unless it is moved by some force outside of itself. And you know that this is the case with all lifeless things.

A Tree

is different. Certainly no one has ever seen a tree walking, but a tree, nevertheless, has some power of movement. A tree grows. At first a tree is only a seed and it is as different from the tree it eventually becomes as anything could be—yet this seed, by some force within itself, sends out roots, absorbs moisture and pushes its first tender shoot through the hard soil. It drinks in air and sunshine, and by using these things for its own development, grows into maturity as a tree.

The sunshine, air and water do not of themselves cause the growth of the tree. If they did then you

would see the garden roller growing, too. No, there is some principle within the seed itself which enables it to make use of the sunshine, air and water, and it is this principle within the seed itself which is responsible for its growth and development into a tree.

This principle is called life—and because it has this principle of life the tree is a living thing and possesses, in a very limited way, the power to move itself. This principle of life in the tree is called the vegetative “soul.”

An Animal

in addition to the power of growth possessed by the tree, has also the power to move from place to place. Sticks and trees can move in this way only if they are moved by a force entirely outside of themselves. An animal moves from place to place by a power within itself—by a force which is part of itself and which is bound up with its very being. This life principle in the animal is called the animal “soul,” and we see, as in the case of the tree, that this “soul,” or life principle, is really the power which a being has of moving itself.

In the case of the animal its “soul” also gives it the power of experiencing pain or pleasure and of acting for its own comfort and preservation. The spider’s web, the hive of the bee, and the gathering and storing of food by the ant, are all evidences of this.

During the Long Centuries

that have passed since the creation of the world what change has taken place in the habits of birds and bees and ants? The nests built by birds, the hives of bees and the manner in which ants gather and store food have all remained unchanged from the very beginning. They build no better nests, produce no better hives and show no greater skill than they showed three thousand years ago. The achievements of animals

have remained stationary throughout the centuries.

If we study the change in human outlook and development over the past three thousand years we shall see a progress so vast that we shall be forced to the conclusion that the difference between the human and the animal soul is one not only of degree, but of kind. We shall realize something of the power of the human soul. We will now, therefore, consider the last, and the most important, of the four things brought together by our proverb—Man.

Man

like the tree, assimilates nourishment and grows. Like the animal he has sensation, is capable of movement from place to place, and acts for his own comfort and preservation. But, unlike the animal, man is progressive. Animals act today in precisely the same manner that they acted centuries ago.

The Soul of Man

has memory, will and understanding. With these powers man is able to form and compare ideas and to make judgments. He is able to form ideas not only of material things which he can see and touch, but of abstract things such as honesty, truth and justice which the senses cannot in any way apprehend. The organs of taste, smell, sight and hearing are all parts of the body. They are acted upon only by things that are themselves bodies—that is, by material things.

The human soul, or mind, can know things that the senses cannot know. It can understand things that are not material—immaterial things that the material organs of the senses cannot grasp. The soul is able to understand these immaterial things because it is itself immaterial—and because it is immaterial it is certain that the soul cannot perish after the manner of material things.

The Human Soul cannot be destroyed

Material things are composed of parts. By the separation of these parts they can be destroyed. A pencil, for instance, can be destroyed by breaking it up into parts. But an immaterial thing, such as honesty or truth or justice—or a human soul—cannot be so destroyed. It has no parts to separate and it cannot, therefore, be broken up. The death of the body does not involve the destruction of the soul.

The Human Soul cannot Die

It must live on forever. The very idea which man possesses that his soul will never die, and his intense desire that he should live forever, proves this fact. With death everywhere around him man could never have conceived the idea of immortality but for the fact that he has a soul which will never die.

The Desire for Perfect Happiness is common to all men. It must, therefore, have been implanted in human nature by the Author of Nature—God. The very fact that men desire perfect happiness is proof that it is possible to attain it.

It cannot, however, be satisfied in this life, for happiness that will end is not perfect happiness, and it is certain that every man must one day die. Perfect happiness, therefore, can only be attained in a future life which will not end—an eternal life in which man can find that perfect happiness for which his whole nature yearns.

We know, therefore that every man has a Soul. We know that the Soul can never die, or be destroyed.

We know that God has prepared a perfect and never ending life of complete happiness for each one of us.

VIII

CURIOSITY . . .

is a very strong human characteristic and man's desire to know has resulted in many most important and useful discoveries.

It is because you are curious that you are reading this leaflet. You want to know what it is all about, and there are probably many other things you would like to know. You might like to know, for instance, why we have so many people undernourished in this country, while millions of acres of land on which good crops could be grown are lying derelict.

You may be curious to know how it is that many millions of money can be spent on armaments, while so little money can be found to help those who wish to use our derelict land to feed the hungry. Perhaps you would like to know why the number of millionaires increases year by year while the number of people suffering from undernourishment also shows a yearly increase. Your curiosity is justified.

Selfishness is the cause

What is the cause of so much injustice? Why are so many decent hardworking men and women treated so abominably by their fellow men and women? Do you really want the answer? It is because there is so much selfishness about today. Some people don't care. They are looking after themselves.

If You Want to Know how to Help

You can help by first getting the idea out of the world that it is right and natural for anyone to be underfed, underclothed, and treated like a scrounger. You can help again by getting the idea into the world that all men have an equal right to a just wage, and a fair share of the material things of the world.

You can help by making it clear that every man should have sufficient to provide for his own needs and to keep himself in moderate comfort. He should be able to marry if he wishes before he is thirty and have a normal family. He should be able to provide for his old age and to put away something for holidays and sickness.

You can help by insisting that God has provided sufficient for the needs of all. It is just as unnatural for one of God's family to be denied a fair share of his Heavenly Father's bounty as it is for him to be denied a share of the food provided by his earthly father. Later on you will see how you can help still further, but in the meantime you may ask: "What is the cause of all this social injustice?"

The cause of such injustice and selfishness is one thing, and one thing only—the growing disbelief in a life after death and disregard of God's laws. But many don't believe this. Of course they don't. They have never troubled to think about it. Well, let us think about it now.

We say that the denial of a life after death and the forgetfulness of God and His laws, is the reason why men act unjustly and selfishly towards their fellow men

How can this be? Well, in the first place, every man desires happiness. Now, if man had no soul and when he died that were the end—if, in short, there were no life after death—wouldn't it be natural for him to do all in his power to get whatever happiness he could while this life lasted? Of course it would. If this were our only life, it would be certain that the highest good would consist in enjoying to the full its pleasures and comforts.

If this were really our only life, then a man would be simply mad who endured hardship and privation

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when he could avoid them. Of what use would self-sacrifice be to a man who had no soul and had only this life on earth to live? Self-sacrifice would merely deprive him of so much pleasure and comfort which he would never have the chance to obtain again.

If there were No Life after Death—No God—No Morality

It would be merely absurd even to suggest that a man should conform to the laws which say: "Thou shalt not steal" . . . "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods." To a man with the lust for pleasure burning in his veins, the greed for money devouring his heart, and the passion for power seething in his soul, respect for law and morality would be the greatest of all absurdities—if there were no life after death.

"Why should I go poor?" he would ask, "when so many are rich? I need money. Money is power; money is the key to pleasure. If I cannot get it by what you call lawful means, why shouldn't I get it by any means? There is no life after this life. There is no God. There are no rewards, no punishments. Why shouldn't I get all the happiness I can while I still have life? Tomorrow, I may be dead and death ends all. I believe in getting all I can . . . NOW."

If there were no life after death, if there were no just God, he would be right.

And the Weakest goes to the Wall

Is it any wonder then that there is so much injustice and suffering in the world when so many believe in this lying creed that death ends all? Is it any wonder that the world has become a battle ground where the strong and the unscrupulous take all the good things of life and the weak are driven to the wall? Is it any wonder that nations are arming to the teeth, regarding each other as potential enemies, while many

of their citizens live on the verge of starvation? Is it any wonder that wealth accumulates in the hands of the few while multitudes live in abject poverty? Is it any wonder that the most glaring acts of injustice are committed on the plea of necessity and excused by the cry: "We must live"?

We see then, and experience proves it to be true, that it is because so many men today delude themselves with the thought that there is no just God and no life after death that injustice is so rampant in the world today.

Such Ignorance and Injustice should not continue

We all know perfectly well that there is no need for any man, woman or child on earth to go short of the necessities of life. We all know perfectly well that the world contains enough, and to spare, of warmth, shelter, food and clothing for everyone. We know that there is no need for nations to be arming to the teeth and to be full of hatred for one another. We all know, too, that it is the idea that death ends all which is responsible for the present chaotic condition of the world, for the greed and the selfishness and the injustices meted out by man to man.

It is up to you to do your utmost to remedy the injustice, ignorance and selfishness which you see around you in the world today. There will be a chance of putting right much of that which is wrong, when men really begin to realize that there is a life after death and that there is a just God Who punishes the selfish and loves the unselfish. The League for God is working so that all will realize this.

IX

CRISIS TO CRISIS . . .

In recent times the world has awakened day after day to some fresh crisis. Continually it has faced the threat of world-wide war, desolation and ruin. Wireless, posters and splash headlines in the newspapers have blazoned forth the news of the mobilizing of fleets, the manning and reinforcing of frontiers, the massing of troops and of armies at full war strength. The whole world has resounded to the tread of marching feet.

Many, apparently calm and carrying on the normal work of the day, have been merely hiding their fears while they awaited the fatal spark that at any moment might set the world ablaze and engulf us all in one mad, roaring flame of war, anarchy and devastation.

The breaking of Treaties

How, indeed, can we hope for peace if solemn agreements, freely entered into, and on which the ink is as yet scarcely dry, are to be broken as though they had never been made? How can the future peace of the world be assured if the solemnly pledged word of nations and peoples is callously disregarded? What hope is there of peace and concord among the nations of the earth when some are kept in a state of economic slavery over a period of many years? How can there be peace when legitimate demands for fair treatment are regarded as hostile acts, and when, on the other hand, the smallest grievance is magnified a thousand-fold? Is it any wonder that justice yields place to force?

Business Morality

Throughout the whole world commercial integrity is at a very low ebb. Contracts are often made only

with the intention of evading the obligations incurred as soon as self-interest is at stake. Sharp practice is looked upon in many places as a most necessary business virtue. In the cut-throat competition which follows, the working man is thrown on the scrap heap. He must then exist as best he can until such time as he can again find a job which will keep him and his family just above the border line of starvation.

Freedom replaced by Slavery

In parts of the world today freedom is a thing unknown and almost un hoped for. The man in the street in such countries dares not allow his true thoughts to be known. He must not criticize those in authority, however evil their actions may be. His work is often chosen for him and he cannot move from place to place unless he has special permission to do so. He is forbidden the practice of his religion, or must accept the one chosen for him by those in control of the country.

Has the World gone mad?

Have we all gone mad? Is some dreadful mania sweeping across the face of the earth? Does the average man actually desire war rather than peace, and slavery rather than freedom? You know very well that he does not. You know that not one man in a million wants war. The ordinary man passionately wants peace and freedom. He is not concerned with the conquest of other countries, with national aggrandizement or with the triumph of this or that particular political party.

He wants only to follow his occupation and a wage which will keep him and his family in decent comfort. He wants his wife beside him and his children around him; he wants his pipe in the evening by the fireside in winter, his garden or other hobby to interest him at other seasons. He wants some security against sickness and old age.

Why are Peace, Freedom, Prosperity in peril?

Why is it, then, that we who so passionately desire peace find ourselves so often in danger of devastating war? Why is it that we have a world in which millions who want freedom must bow to the will of the ruthless few? Why is it that in a world overflowing with plenty so many thousands are living from hand to mouth, not knowing what tomorrow may bring forth?

Why is there War, Slavery, Poverty?

There is war, slavery and poverty because the world as a whole is trying to live without God. There is war, slavery and poverty because so many men have forgotten their duty to God and to their neighbor. There is no fixed standard of morality, truth or justice.

The great majority of men do not base their actions on what is right and just according to God's laws, but on their own idea of what is good for them. The world's watchword is no longer "Thy will be done," but "My will be done." By "good" many people mean "what is good for me." In a word, the world is suffering from a festering sore of the worst possible description—the sore of selfishness and greed.

Selfish Greed

is the canker which makes men "smash and grab" raiders for the material things of life. It is turning every man's hand against his brother. Even in the smallest things of life, in private and in public, selfish greed is now a ruling passion. This passion makes men seek power and possessions at any cost.

Selfish greed is the root cause of oppression and of poverty. Because of it millions of men are ground down beneath the iron heel of those whose interest lies in keeping them poverty-stricken. By their acts of selfish greed men deride and mock Him Who said

"Love your neighbor as yourself" and "Bear ye one another's burdens." Many men today are not bearing each other's burdens.

To do away with greed and its hideous consequences in the world we must first of all banish greed and selfishness from our own lives. We can do this by knowing, loving and serving God and by loving our neighbor as ourselves for God's sake. Pray constantly also to God that He, our loving Father, will grant peace to the world in spite of the waywardness of many of His children.

Wars, slavery and poverty are all the result of selfish greed.

If we would abolish war, slavery, poverty and greed we must turn again to God and to the laws of God. God is all wise and all just. If His laws were obeyed by all, injustice would be impossible. We must have a fixed standard of morality, truth and justice. These are only to be found in the laws of God.

To avoid war, slavery and poverty, therefore, we must know the laws of God and keep them.

(This series of short articles prepared by The League for God of England, published in The Catholic Mind for September 8th and 22nd, will be continued next month. Reprints in four-page form of each article, for personal distribution, are available.)

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